



Benito Orihuel / General Manager of Citrosol

Title

“Citrosol consolidated three years’ growth in 2012”

Article

Citrosol has developed remarkably since 2008, leading to a 35% increase in sales volume in 2011. After three consecutive years of growth, in 2012 the company consolidated the trading results and relationships established in the preceding years. Benito Orihuel, general manager of this Valencian company, confirms that, after several years of steady growth, “2012 was a year of consolidation. Months that enabled us to secure and strengthen trading relationships with new customers; and to form even closer ties with our most loyal client base, both in Spain and on the international scene. Citrosol’s performance has been a great

success because our activity and solutions and our post-harvest technology and treatments, aimed primarily at the citrus sector, are a fully-developed activity with a long history in a sector where there is enormous competition.”

VF. What are the pillars on which Citrosol’s growth since 2008 has been based?

BO. Citrosol’s development is based on innovation, making improvements to the functionality of our products and the effectiveness of the solutions and treatments that we offer. One of the company’s principles is not to market anything that does not give an excellent result.

In the last few years we have developed revolutionary new solutions aimed at reducing the environmental impact of fruit and vegetable packing houses. Citrosol’s market launch of Citrosol A S wax in 2008 was a great success because, as a result of its excellent properties, it reduces the temperature in drying tunnels enormously; and at the end of 2009 we started marketing the Zero Spill System, a solution that has been very well received and has become a standard for the sector when it comes to applying drencher or water tank treatments because it maintains maximum effectiveness and avoids spills. The Citrosol Zero Spill System is fully established in Spain and this very year we have installed the first systems in South Africa.

This series of innovations gives our customers excellent results, ensuring that our publicity, communications and presentations are as close as possible to the actual results. The message that

Citrosol projects is professional, technical and transparent. It's not just talk.

VF. How has Citrosol's human capital contributed to its development?

BO. Citrosol's human capital is undoubtedly one of the pillars on which its development is based. In 2008 and 2009 we embarked on a policy of renovation, bringing to the company the best professionals available, on a technical and scientific level and in terms of commercial technical service. And this has contributed positively to the firm's evolution and growth.

VF. What effect has internationalisation had on the company's results?

BO. Although Citrosol has also grown in the domestic market, thanks to the confidence that new customers have placed in the company, our international development has been very strong and decisive. We have grown more abroad, particularly in places such as Turkey, Egypt, South Africa, Peru and Brazil. Citrosol had been selling in those markets for some time but in 2008 we changed some of our concepts and focused attention more on those countries. In fact we even have permanent personnel in some of those places.

VF. What are the current challenges that customers are presenting?

BO. Citrosol enjoys the challenges of the sector. We try to concentrate on solving wide-ranging problems that are common

to the vast majority of operators. And in this activity we have found that what our customers appreciate, even more than the prices of our products and systems, is the ability to achieve constant, homogeneous results and good service that goes beyond correct application of products and systems. We provide comprehensive personalised advice in order to solve our customers' specific needs and thus be able to offer them the most suitable solution, because every customer, every packing house and every part of an application has specific characteristics.

As far as challenges in the sector are concerned, it's worth highlighting the fact that in the last two years we have characterised a disease that we call "bottom of the crate rind breakdown". This problem appears in certain stages of the season, especially in November in Satsumas and Clementines in situations of extreme rind sensitivity, and it appears after degreening and drencher treatment. Citrosol has not only succeeded in characterising this disease but has also managed to control it almost completely with Fortisol Ca and Fortisol Ca Plus. This is a clear example of a challenge that we have successfully overcome.

We are proud and grateful for the trust that our customers place in Citrosol.

VF. What problems are posed by the withdrawal of active materials from the market?

BO. The withdrawal of active materials is an enormous challenge that sometimes has no immediate solution. However,

some problems have been solved. The environmental problem of spills from drencher mixtures which I mentioned earlier is avoided with the Citrosol Zero Spill System. This technology corresponds perfectly to one of the company's slogans, "The best way of treating waste is not to generate it".

Citrosol has also developed alternative treatments that respond to demands made by many supermarket chains with regard to commercial limitations concerning the number of active materials that can appear as residues on fruit or vegetables.

Citrosol always tries to convert challenges into opportunities. We are not infallible but we try to learn from the problems that may appear in specific circumstances when applying a particular product or system. We are constantly working in order to go on improving and meeting the challenges that our customers present.

VF. Is there any particular case of withdrawal of active material where Citrosol is currently working to offer solutions?

BO. Guazatine was withdrawn at the end of December and very soon there will be solutions that perform the same role and reduce losses during transport, both in Europe and in transcontinental shipping of citrus.

VF. Has the procedure for registering active materials in Spain been made easier?

BO. The procedure has been made slightly easier with the passing of the Law of Common Denominations, which has

simplified some parts of the process. But the process of registering new formulations is really still quite slow.

In general, the Ministry of Agriculture's pesticides registry and the biocides registry administered by the Ministry of Health are too slow, and this presents a problem for internationalisation because it's hard to register and market a formulation in other countries if it hasn't first been approved in Spain.

The government should draw up a list of all the bottlenecks that make it impossible for companies to establish an international presence quickly because of bureaucratic obstacles. And this is a clear example. It's very difficult to sell a product in other countries if you can't sell it in Spain.

VF. What novelties has Citrosol launched recently?

BO. In the last year we have launched a system that solves the problem of disinfecting storage rooms and areas in the packing house, the X3 Nebulizer, together with two products, Gloquat PC and Quacide PQ60 EC. The latter is a response to the problems raised by some German supermarkets, which reject the use of quaternary ammonium compounds in the disinfection of packing houses. This is a particular commercial requirement that comes from Germany. There is really no legal problem regarding disinfection with quaternary ammonium compounds and the results of the X3 Nebulizer with Gloquat PC are excellent, in addition to the fact that it is a "ready to use" biocide, which makes it convenient and easy to work with. But some German supermarkets want to avoid any quaternary ammonium residues that might remain on fruit or vegetables,

although the MRL for contaminating a product in disinfection is very high. This is an extra-legal requirement that is solved with Quacide PQ60 EC (a biocide without quaternary ammonium compounds).

As far as novelties are concerned, another notable feature is the increase recorded in the development and marketing of coatings for tropical fruits in other countries.

VF. What range of products do Citrosol's solutions cover?

BO. Our treatments are currently used on a varied range of fruits including citrus, pears, apples and bananas and exotic tropical fruits such as papaya.

VF. What kind of communication does Citrosol have with its customers and with the sector in general? What channels or paths do you use?

BO. Citrosol likes to be in the news exclusively for its professional activities. And in this connection the company's communications concentrate on transmitting information of technical, scientific or professional importance for the sector or for businesses. Also, the growth of the company has led to greater development of the area of communication and the company's website, one of the channels for maintaining contact with the sector.

Conferences and seminars are another way of keeping in touch. We recently attended the International Citrus Seminar in Peru, we took part in sponsoring a symposium on post-harvest diseases in Turkey and gave a talk there, we were a diamond

sponsor for the International Citrus Congress in Valencia and we organised a seminar there about citrus post-harvest treatments that made an international impact. We are constantly contributing to national and international technical forums and learning from them. We pass on all these new developments and experiences through our website and various national and international media.

VF. Does the company consider the dissemination of information important?

BO. Passing on the results of research, experiments and studies is an important activity because in the end we have a duty to our customers and our customers have a duty to the consumer. The fresher the fruit and vegetables that reach the market, and the more we can do to contribute to that aim, the better the results will be for our customers and for the company. Our customers and Citrosol are fighting to occupy a place in consumer food intake, and to ensure that fruit and vegetables reach the consumer fresh, with no losses.

That is why we attach importance to providing information about our technical and professional activities. Nowadays, in most companies the people we talk to are the technical experts. They evaluate the results of our products and verify the effectiveness of our systems and services. In order to win their trust the message has to be professional, technical and transparent.